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Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child
Seventy-third session
13-30 September 2016
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Consideration of reports of States parties

List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Sierra Leone

The State party is requested to submit, in writing, additional, updated information, if possible before 1 June 2016 (10,700 words maximum).

The Committee may take up any aspect of children's rights set out in the Convention during the dialogue with the State party.

Part I

In this section, the State party is requested to submit its responses to the following questions.

1. Please provide information on the measures taken to implement the National Child Protection Policy and the National Action Plan for Children. Please also provide updated information on the establishment of the National Children's Commission, particularly on its mandate, funding, staffing, and coordination role, and on its relationship with the Human Rights Commission for Sierra Leone with regard to the monitoring of children's rights.

2. Please provide the Committee with updated information on the budget allocation for child-related programmes and explain the steps taken to ensure that all line ministries adopt child-friendly budgeting. Please inform the Committee about the measures taken to combat corruption. Please also provide updated information on the case management system and the web-based Child Protection Information Management System, and on the financial, technical and human resources allocated for the maintenance and operationalization of the Child Protection Information Management System.

3. Please elaborate on the progress achieved in removing from the Constitution all provisions that are discriminatory against children. Please also provide detailed information on the targeted measures taken and the awareness-raising campaigns run to eliminate traditional attitudes and laws that discriminate against children.

4. Please provide updated information on measures taken to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, on efforts taken to strengthen education for parents and

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caregivers on alternative methods of discipline, and on initiatives aimed at raising awareness of the issue in society.

5. Please provide information on the measures taken to strengthen the technical and operational capacity of the family support units. Please also provide information on systems for early detection and prevention of child abuse at the community level, including on community-based child protection mechanisms and on what support and rehabilitation services the State party provides for child victims.

6. Please explain what measures have been taken to better implement and enforce the Sexual Offences Act of 2012, particularly by the police, and provide information on cases reported, convictions, access to legal aid, and any measures taken to strengthen the judicial system so that it can better deal with cases of sexual abuse of children. Please also explain any steps taken to counter the underreporting of cases and out-of-court settlements, to explicitly prohibit in law and prosecute female genital mutilation and to outlaw the forced initiation of girls into the Bondo/Sande secret societies.

7. Please provide information on the implementation of the National Alternative Care Policy for Children, particularly with regard to establishing and implementing minimum standards for the operation of residential care homes and regulating informal care (*men pikin*). Please clarify what the State's financial, technical and human resource support is for the Trust Fund for Child Welfare and for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs strategic plan for 2013-2017. Please also provide information on the adoption procedures, the implementation of the new adoption law and the steps taken to promote domestic adoption.

8. Please provide updated information on how the needs of children with disabilities are reflected in the National Policy for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities and the Persons with Disability Act. Please also provide information on the mandate and activities of the recently established National Commission for Persons with Disabilities and National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities, with regard to children. Please inform the Committee about services for children with mental health problems.

9. Please inform the Committee about measures taken to ensure access to proper medical treatment for children with HIV/AIDS. Please also provide updated information about initiatives taken to reduce the under-five and maternal mortality rates and chronic malnutrition, and on access to clean water. Please also provide information on special health services for Ebola survivors, particularly children, and on their special needs.

10. Please provide the Committee with updated information on the:

(a) Implementation of the National Standards for Adolescent- and Youth-Friendly Health Services, of 2011;

(b) Measures taken to address the high rate of teenage pregnancy;

(c) Action taken to legalize abortion, and make it accessible to adolescent girls, and on measures taken to provide adolescents with sexual and reproductive health information;

(d) Measures taken for prevention and care, in respect of children and young people who use drugs and consume alcohol.

11. Please provide information on measures taken to:

(a) Promote early childhood education for children under 5 years of age;

(b) Eliminate all costs for education, as well as gender and regional disparities;

(c) Address the high number of dropouts, particularly among pregnant girls;

(d) Abolish the Ministry of Education's discriminatory policy (instituted in March 2015) of barring pregnant girls from attending schools and sitting their Basic Education Certificate examinations;

(e) Address sexual abuse of children, mostly of girls, by teachers.

12. Please provide updated information on the resources allocated and measures taken to address the problem and root causes of children in street situations and issues related to their situation, including substance abuse programmes, HIV/AIDS screening and health services, reunification with their parents when in their best interests and interim care.

13. Please provide updated information on the implementation of the National Action Plan for Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2013-2016) and on the impact of by-laws developed at the community level on the various forms of child labour that are traditionally practiced.

14. Please provide information about what measures have been taken to implement the Committee's previous recommendations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/C/OPSC/SLE/CO/1).

15. Please provide information about what measures have been taken to implement the Committee's previous recommendations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC/C/OPAC/SLE/CO/1).

Part II

In this section, the Committee invites the State party to provide a brief update (no more than three pages) on the information presented in its report regarding:

(a) New bills and laws, and their respective regulations;

(b) New institutions and their mandates, and institutional reforms;

(c) Recently introduced policies, programmes and action plans, and their scope and financing;

(d) Recent ratifications of human rights instruments.

Part III

Data, statistics and other information, if available

1. Please provide consolidated budget information for the past three years on budget lines relating to children and the social sectors, as well as under the various ministries, indicating the percentage of each budget line in terms of the total national budget, gross national product and geographic allocation. Please also provide information on measures taken to ensure that the authorities are guided by the principle of the best interests of the child in their budgetary decisions.

2. Please provide, if available, updated statistical data, disaggregated by age, sex, ethnic origin, national origin, geographic location and socioeconomic status, for the past three years, on the number of children:

(a) Engaged in child labour in the informal economy, breaking the information down by type of work, including hazardous work;

(b) Who are victims of human trafficking, sale and sexual exploitation;

(c) Who are victims of prostitution;

(d) Who are victims of child pornography.

3. Please provide, if available, updated statistical data, disaggregated by age, sex, socioeconomic background, ethnic origin and geographical location, for the past three years, on the number and/or rates of:

(a) Infant mortality and child mortality;

(b) Teenage pregnancy and girls receiving medical and professional services for pregnancy and childbirth;

(c) Abortions;

(d) Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS;

(e) Child survivors of Ebola and children orphaned by Ebola;

(f) Allocation of resources to the primary health-care system;

(g) Enrolment and completion rates, in percentages, of the relevant age groups in pre-primary schools, in primary schools and in secondary schools;

(h The number and percentage of dropouts and repetitions;

(i) Children separated from their parents;

(j) Children living in child-headed households;

(k) Children placed in institutions and with foster families;

(l) Children adopted domestically or through intercountry adoptions;

(m) Children who have benefited from Government's welfare system;

(n) Children in detention settings, including juvenile and adult detention centres, and in police custody, as well as information on how long children are remaining locked up by the police, with reference both to children in need of care and protection and to children in conflict with the law.

4. Please provide data, disaggregated by age, sex, type of disability, ethnic origin and geographical location, for the past three years, on the number of children with disabilities:

(a) Living with their families;

(b) Living in institutions;

(c) Attending regular primary schools;

(d) Attending regular secondary schools;

(e) Attending special schools;

(f) Not attending school;

(g) Abandoned by their families.

5. Please provide the Committee with an update of any data in the report that may have been superseded by more recent data or that may have been affected by new developments.

6. In addition, the State party may list areas affecting children that it considers to be of priority with regard to the implementation of the Convention.